

THE DOTted LINE

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AN ACQUISITION AND GRANT NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1995

THE FEDERAL ACQUISITION STREAMLINING ACT OF 1994

(by Elaine Wheeler, OST, M-61)

The main purpose of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (FASA) is to revise and streamline the acquisition laws of the Federal Government. With few exceptions, the provisions of the law are effective October 1, 1995. These exceptions include: (1) increasing the cost or pricing data threshold from \$100,000 to \$500,000 and removing the requirement for commercial pricing certificates (this has already been implemented in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) by the Federal Acquisition Circular (FAC) 90-22); (2) removing the requirement for determinations regarding the use of cost or incentive type contracts; and (3) a new term "micro-purchases" was introduced which pertains to procurements of \$2,500 or less, and is expected to

substantially reduce administrative costs.

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) permitted the implementation of the micropurchase process even before the FAR promulgated its changes. Accordingly, by memorandum dated November 2, 1994, the Office of Acquisition and Grant Management notified contracting offices of the implementation of the micro-purchase process. This process enables the small purchase-small business reservation to be dissolved for all acquisitions of \$2,500 or less. In the event a requirement cannot be obtained from the mandatory sources of supply listed in FAR Part 8, micropurchases may be acquired from any supplier or vendor, without regard to business size, number of employees, or amount of revenue earned by the firm.

The other two FASA changes were also implemented by Office of Acquisition and Grant Management memorandums--- notification of the cost or pricing data increase and removing the commercial pricing certificates was promulgated on December 14, 1994, and notification of the removal of the determination regarding use of cost or incentive type contracts was disseminated on February 9, 1995.

Currently, most of the FASA coverage is going through the Federal comment process by publishing proposed implementation coverage in the Federal Register. Shortly after the comment process is completed, we expect the FAR will be modified to implement the FASA changes. Some of the changes you may see include coverage that:

1. Recognizes the ability to compete orders among competed contract holders (this is currently being done successfully at the VOLPE National Transportation Systems Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.)
2. Requires notification to contractors as to whether or not award will or will not be made with or without discussions.

3. Specifies a specific timeframe for a debriefing of 5 days (to the maximum extent practicable) after an offeror's request.
4. Establishes "simplified acquisition procedures" for procurements of \$100,000 or less.

Permits a one year contract for severable services that begins in one fiscal year and ends in the next fiscal year without regard to any option to extend the period of the contract. Funds for a fiscal year may be obligated for the total amount of the contract.

5. Repeals the requirement for an annual Report on Competition.

This year is expected to be a very interesting year for procurement. We will keep you posted on any other changes.

TRANSPORTATION ACQUISITION
REGULATION (TAR) and
TRANSPORTATION ACQUISITION
MANUAL (TAM)
(by Elaine Wheeler, OST, M-61)

As most of you know, the 1994 edition of the TAR and TAM has been distributed and became effective October 1, 1994. Many of you have asked, "Where do we go from here"? Because of the volumes of paper we all must deal

with, we are striving to limit the number of TAR/TAM Notices, Bulletins, etc. Our goal is to issue page changes to the TAR and TAM every 3-4 months and to issue interim (before page changes) TAR/TAM Notices only when absolutely necessary. We hope this will relieve some of the paper burdens you are now facing. In addition, we are exploring the use of automation to reduce the need for paper and to communicate with you faster.

We continue to look for ways to streamline/improve the TAR and TAM. We have received several recommended changes to these documents, and will hold meetings with OA representatives. We believe this type of participative policy/procedural development produces faster, more effective coverage.

We encourage and welcome your suggestions. When you send suggestions to us, please include the applicable TAR/TAM cite, any recommended wording changes and why you believe the change is necessary. Please send your suggestions to Elaine Wheeler, 400 7th Street, S.W., Room 9401, Washington, DC 20590, or by fax on (202) 366-7510. If you have any questions, please contact Elaine on (202) 366-4272.

DRAFT REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS (RFPs) AND ACQUISITION PLANS (APs)

(by Kathy Espenshade, OST, M-63 and Barbara Weakley, OST, M-61)

The Transportation Acquisition Manual (TAM) prohibits the release of draft RFPs for acquisitions prior to the approval of the Acquisition Plan (AP). (See TAM 1207.102 and TAM 1234, Appendix A, Section IV, paragraph 2.a)

After careful consideration of input received from industry and various OAs, authority has been obtained from the Assistant Secretary for Administration to remove this constraint in an effort to streamline the acquisition process.

You may now issue draft RFPs for all acquisitions prior to final approval of the AP. However, if the approved acquisition strategy in the AP is different than what was included in the draft RFP, strong consideration should be given to issuing another draft RFP to inform industry of the proposed changes.

Formal page changes to TAM Chapters 1207 and 1234 will be issued in the near future.

We hope that this authorization will help streamline the acquisition process in the spirit of the National Performance Review. If

you have any questions, please call Kathy Espenshade at (202) 366-4276 or Barbara Weakley at (202) 366-4967.

CONTRACT INFORMATION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (by Dave Jordan, OST, M-61)

In our continuing effort to improve the Contract Information System (CIS), a DOT working group recently completed a review of the entire system. The group, composed of representatives from each of the operating administrations (OAs), met weekly to research and develop specific recommendations designed to improve the accuracy, accessibility, and usefulness of the CIS.

During discussions with the working group, the OA representatives knew that they had to enter their procurement data in the CIS, but many of their people did not know what the CIS was used for or the purpose for entering the data. One of the recommendations in the group's final report is to publish the purpose and use of the CIS.

The CIS is an automated post-award reporting system that is required by Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 4.601. The CIS currently contains 52 reportable data fields, and operates on the Transportation

Computer Center's AMDAHL computer system. Data input is received from each OA's procurement office via the CIS On-line Data Entry System, FAA's SAM/CIS automated interface, Form DOT F 4200.11, or magnetic tape.

The CIS is the principal source of procurement information in the Department. It is critical that all data be entered correctly and in a timely manner. The system provides contract information needed to answer queries from many sources including Congress, the General Accounting Office, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), State and local governments, and the private sector. The CIS serves as the basis for the Department's input to the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS). OMB obtains procurement information from the FPDS to make determinations on budget cuts in the contracting area. The CIS provides a data base of contract awards for the Office of the Secretary and the OAs to use to obtain procurement information. For example, we use the CIS to analyze the workload and the types of procurements processed in each procurement office. The CIS is used as the basis for the annual reconciliation of procurement data, and provides information to OMB for the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program Report.

CONTRACT INFORMATION SYSTEM (CIS)

(by Barbara Fallat, OST, M-61)

This is a reminder that whenever a user of the CIS On-Line Data Entry System experiences technical problems getting into the system, the individual should contact the Transportation Computer Center Users Help Desk at (202) 366-9938. If the individual has other problems regarding the system, please call Barbara Fallat at (202) 366-4974.

QUARTERLY SUMMARY CONTRACT ACTION REPORT (\$25,000 OR LESS) (SF-281)

(by Barbara Fallat, OST, M-61)

Concerns have been raised about reporting micropurchases (valued at \$2500 or less) on the SF-281. Procurement offices DO NOT report micropurchases on the SF-281 if they were obtained using the Government purchase card. However, micro-purchases obtained using the simplified acquisition procedures must be reported on the SF-281. If you have any questions, please call Barbara Fallat at (202) 366-4974.

REPORTS

(by Bob Taylor, OST, M-62)

In response to a GAO report on university research, the Office of Budget initiated a reporting system for all OAs to report contracts, grants and cooperative agreements for R&D to universities on an annual basis. After a few complaints from the OAs who believed the DOT Contract Information System (CIS) and Grant Information System (GIS) could provide that data, M-60 was approached by the Office of Budget. With the planned upgrades to the CIS and GIS, we agreed to provide those reports for the FY 1995 report. This should be one less report for you and another reason to ensure that accurate data is provided to the CIS and GIS.

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT SERVICES

(by Deborah Ansell, OST, M-64)

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 42.1 prescribes policies and procedures for obtaining and providing interagency contract administration and audit services. In Fiscal Year (FY) 1993, an interagency agreement was established between DOT and the

Defense Contract Management Command containing basic terms and conditions under which the OAs may order contract administration services. The agreement was recently modified to incorporate a lower loaded reimbursement rate for FY 1995 of \$40.30 per hour. If you have any questions or would like a copy of the agreement and/or the change page, please call Deborah Ansell at (202) 366-6689.

FORMS AUTOMATION

(by Charlotte Hackley, OST, M-61)

With the exception of Form DOT F 4220.11, the Department of Transportation forms (e.g., Form DOT 4220.4) cited under Part 1253 of the TAR and Chapter 1253 of the TAM are now automated. OAs should contact their forms manager for further information concerning the software package.

TAM 1253.105 currently authorizes the forms prescribed in TAR and TAM to be computer-generated as long as the name, content, sequence, and assigned number are not changed. However, we are considering changes to this requirement.

DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY INTEREST RATES

(by Charlotte Hackley, OST, M-61)

The Department of Treasury now has an Inside Line Voice Information Bulletin Board. The bulletin board provides information including the "Renegotiation Board Interest Rates". The rate is issued bi-annually by Treasury and must be used by the contracting officer to comply with various requirements of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (e.g., FAR 52.232-25(a)(6)).

You may access the bulletin board by dialing (202) 874-6995, and follow the instructions provided to you on the voice prompts. The following rates are applicable for the periods cited: July to December 1989 (9.125%); January to June 1990 (8.5%); July to December 1990 (9.0%); January to June 1991 (8.375%); July to December 1991 (not available); January to June 1992 (6.875%); July to December 1992 (7.0%); January to June 1993 (6.5%); July to December 1993 (5.625%); January to June 1994 (5.5%); July to December 1994 (7.0%); and January to June 1995 (8.125%).

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 1994 GENERAL
ACCOUNTING OFFICE PROTESTS
(by Dave Jordan, OST, M-61)

The chart on page 11 illustrates the DOT's General Accounting Office protest activity for FY 1994. The total number of protests decreased from 110 in FY 1993 to 90 in FY 1994. The number of sustained protests decreased from 12 in FY 1993 to 3 in FY 1994. Let's keep up the good work in FY 1995!!

PUBLICATIONS
(by Dave Jordan, OST, M-61)

The General Services Administration's Information Technology Service has the following publications available:

<u>CODE</u>	<u>PUBLICATION</u>
KAP-94-2-I	Federal Government Business Processing Re-engineering: Lessons Learned
KAP-94-3-I	Welcome to Information Resources Management in the Federal Government
KAP-94-4-I	Energy Efficient Microcomputers: Guidelines on the Acquisition, Management, and Use
KAP-94-8-I	Improving Industry/

Government
Communications
Major Information
Technology
Acquisitions

KML-93-1-R Applying Technology to Record Systems: A Media Guideline

KMM-94-1-I Transition to the Future: A Model IRM Program for the 21st Century

KMP-92-2-P A Guide for Acquiring FIP Support Services

KMP-93-1-P A Guide for Using GSA's Schedule Contracts for FIP Resources

KMP-93-2-P A Guide for Evaluating Proposals and Bids

KMP-93-4-P A Guide for Acquiring Software Development Services

KMP-94-3-P A Guide for Acquiring Telecommunications Equipment and Services

KMP-94-4-P Communications Between Government and Industry

If you have any questions or would like more information on how to order any of these publications, please contact Bob Carey at GSA on (202) 501-4860.

DOT/NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW GRANT AUTOMATION TASK GROUP

(by Ann Fisher, OST, M-62)

As a result of the recommendations made in the DOT/National Performance Review (NPR) Grants Delivery Report, the Grants Automation Task Group (GATG) was formed through the Grants Management Council. The task group is looking at departmental grant automation practices and processes; assessing the merits of implementing NPR automation recommendations; exploring governmentwide grant automation trends and initiatives; and developing a strategic plan to coordinate and promote compatible departmentwide grant automation functions.

Highlights of specific topic areas that will be addressed by the DOT/NPR GATG are as follows:

- Review departmentwide administrative grant processes

and procedures to explore similarities and differences for potential streamlining and to identify what parts of the processes are automated.

- Develop automated customer feedback mechanisms.
- Develop e:mail/bulletin board communications capability with DOT customers - example: automation of program information from the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, and communication exchanges with customers through internet.
- Customer access to DOT policies and regulations relative to grant programs.
- Explore governmentwide efforts to standardize automated formats for grants and contracts.

With various working groups looking at ways to restructure DOT, it is more important than ever that we keep everyone informed. We encourage sharing information that would be of common benefit and avoid the potential for duplicating efforts. For more information, please contact Ann Fisher on (202) 366-4288.

GOVERNMENTWIDE CENTRAL
REPOSITORY FOR INDIRECT COST
RATES, DEBARMENT AND
SUSPENSION LISTINGS, CERTIFI-
CATIONS, AND AUDIT REPORTS --
WHAT DO YOU THINK ??

(by Ann Fisher, OST, M-62)

In conjunction with the Department's Council for Excellence in Government Fellowship Program, the Office of Acquisition and Grant Management has initiated a project for streamlining administrative requirements affecting grants and contracts governmentwide. This initiative would simplify the process for obtaining certifications, indirect cost rates, suspension and debarment listings, and audit reports for all Federal agencies and their customers. The concept for certifications, for example, might address having one governmentwide certification executed every three or five years and maintained in a central repository system. Direct customer access to agency specific assurances and cross-cutting certifications would be available in full text in the system. Agencies would have access to indirect cost rates, executed certifications, and any other requirements maintained in the system. These are only some of the numerous options and issues that will need to be addressed. We would be interested in your comments by e-mail:

Ann_Fisher@Postmaster2.dot.gov or call me on (202) 366-4288.

ARTICLES FOR THE DOTted
LINE

Please remember that the DOTted Line is here to help "spread the procurement and grant news." For instance, beginning with the next issue, we will feature a section on DOT activities to reinvent the procurement process. Please share your reinvention experiences with us -success stories, lessons learned, etc. In addition, if you have any other good ideas, some interesting tidbits you would like to share with others, or perhaps a subject(s) you would like for us to discuss in the DOTted Line, please jot them down and send them to:

U.S. Department of
Transportation
Office of Acquisition and
Grant Management
The DOTted LINE
ATTN: Dave Jordan, M-61
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
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Washington, D.C. 20590

You may also fax your article to (202) 366-7510 or use the INTERNET and send to djordan@postmaster2.Dot.Gov. The deadline for the submission of

articles for the next DOTted LINE
is June 30, 1995.

DOTted LINE, please contact
Dave Jordan at (202) 366-4265.

If you have any questions
pertaining to this issue of the

As of 3/14/95

FY 1994 GAO PROTESTS

<u>MODAL</u> <u>ADMINISTRATION</u>	<u>TOTAL NUMBER</u> <u>OF PROTESTS</u>	<u>D I S P O S I T I O N O F P R O T E S T S</u>					
		<u>DENIED</u>	<u>DISMISSED</u>	<u>SUSTAINED</u>	<u>WITHDRAWN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	
USCG	36	13	11	0	8	4*	
FAA	34	5	18	2	9	0	
MARAD	9	5	1	1	2	0	
FHWA	6	2	3	0	1	0	
FTA	2	0	1	0	1	0	
RSPA	2	0	0	0	0	2**	
NHTSA	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	
DOT TOTALS	90	25	34	3	22	6	

*Denied in part/dismissed in part.

**Denied in part/dismissed in part (1);
Denied in part/sustained in part (1).